

HOW THE PALACE OF THE UNWRITTEN LAW PROTECTS WOMEN OF THE SOUTH

The Palace of the Unwritten Law

IN the South the sons of men have built a splendid palace, whose gigantic strength is beautified and ennobled by the motives of its builders.

The imagery on its walls and the tracery in its facades are veritable dreams of the poetry of life, and against the glories of the architecture there plays always the light that comes from high ideals.

And in the palace these sons of men have put their women. Men may not go in, it and live.

The name of the palace is THE UNWRITTEN LAW, and from its threshold Death strikes any man who violates the supreme edict protecting the purity of woman.

It is a sharp contrast—inside the walls, with chivalry as sentinel, there is heard the happy song of women who fear nothing; and outside, the death-rattle in the throat of the man who, attempting to set foot in the holy of holies, is not allowed time for even fear.

In the South the courts of law and the juries stand awed in the shadow of this palace, and liberate men who shoot down other men to allow of no cessation in the song of the women.

By JAMES HAY, JR.

IN Culpeper county, Virginia, at the very doors of the District of Columbia, there has just been concluded one more chapter in the history of "the unwritten law."

James and Philip Strother were tried for having shot to death William F. Bywaters an hour after he had married their sister, Viola. The Strothers claimed that Bywaters tried to desert his bride, with the ultimate design of getting a divorce because they had compelled him, at the pistol point, to marry her. They rested their defense on the simple ground that such conduct was infamous, as they knew Bywaters had ruined their sister.

That Culpeper county and the town of Culpeper sympathized with them, and gave them all moral support possible, is not surprising.

In Culpeper the boys learn, in the very beginning, to admire and respect the girls. In the summer time the young men, belted with silken sashes, ride at the rings in the tourney lists for the honor of placing wreaths of flowers in their sweethearts' hair. All the year is a continual enjoyment for the young people. There are balls, moonlight parties, dinners, drives, tennis parties, sleighing, and, in every town, "the drug store" or postoffice, where every beau knows every belle can be found at certain times.

"Women Made to Be Loved."

As for the young women, whether they sit in the moonlight or dance to the tunes of a dainty fiddler, they expect to be admired. In them there is ingrained the knowledge that women are made to be loved, just as in the men it is an instinct to convince them that their knowledge is entirely correct. In the gentle art of flirtation the Southern girl has no superior, and in the science of being flirted with the Southern man admits no competitors. By "flirtation" is meant what a Southern woman once said:

"The art of breaking a heart by a

silence, or mending a heart by a lift of the lashes."

Back of the merriment and the laughter rests the solemn conviction of every Southern man, that any man who ruins an innocent woman or disrupts a home should be shot down like a dog.

This is not a view entertained in silence and put into practice with secrecy and caution.

It is one of the principles of Southern life, a principle so accepted and so regarded that the relative of an outraged woman may go to the offender on the street, shoot him to death and then be liberated by a jury

of his peers. It is an action that, almost invariably, is commended and stamped with the approval of all the community.

Tragedy Centered in Culpeper.

The killing of Bywaters occurred a few miles from the town of Culpeper, but the town was the scene of all the talk and the subsequent events of the drama, and it was the scene that saw Bywaters and Viola Strother every day prior to the tragedy. It was in the town hall, or in some cousin's parlors that they danced. The girl often spent the night in town. Her friends were Bywaters' friends. They

were but two in the crowd of Culpeper's young people. They were at parties together. Often they paced up and down the quiet old streets together. It was at Culpeper that they alighted when Bywaters took her from Washington after having compelled her to undergo a criminal operation to save his own life.

In the veins of the people of Culpeper there flows the blood of the old Colonial settlers. That closeness of relationship among many people, which is proverbial in Virginia, is emphasized in Culpeper. So wide were the family connections of both Bywaters and the Strothers that the

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Arbaces glanced carefully around.

Not a soul was in sight. "Die then,"

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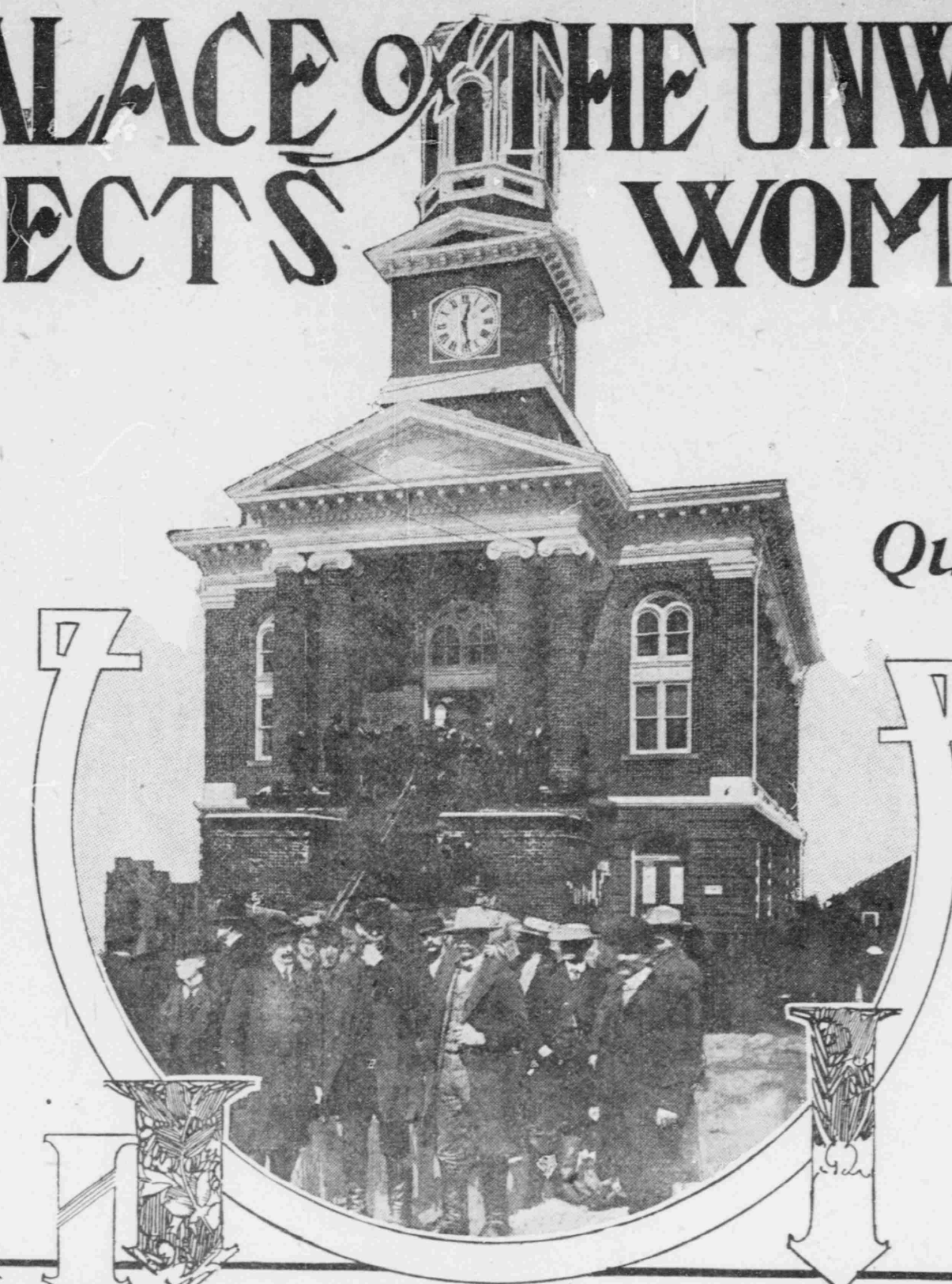
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As Illustrated In
Quaint Old Culpeper,
Where Romance
and Tragedy Inter-
mingled.

Judge of the court and the county's prosecuting attorney were barred from the case by blood relationships to one or the other of the families, and a jury had to be selected from another county.

"Everyone Knows Everyone Else."

Naturally, in such circumstances, every one knows every one else in Culpeper. The men gather in law offices or at the court house. The women, old and young, thanks to the beautiful hospitality that prevails in the South, are continually going to dinners and dances. Buggies meet on the road and stop, while the occupants of one in-quire of the occupants of the other

ace, "the unwritten law," in in-
effable beauty.

Whether the men gather in the court house or in the church, they never get away from that idea of protecting their women should the occasion arise.

But were it not for the adoration which is given to the women, they would not entertain such strict ideas of what should be accorded to the women. From the very fact that they place women on a pedestal, that they are thoroughly convinced of her superiority to anything else on earth, that she is the dominating factor in their lives, comes the other side of the picture: the fact that death and mourning must follow a violation of the respect they entertain for women.

"Chivalry" or "Nonsense?"

Some have called this thing "chivalry," some have called it "nonsense," but the Southern man, who laughs in scorn when he is pointed to the courts as the remedy for wrongs done his women, kills the offender and stands on the ground that he has an absolute right to kill under such circumstances. How widely this sentiment prevails in the South only people who have lived there know. It is practically unanimous south of Mason and Dixon's line. In all that territory a man's soul may be black as night, but he will cling always to the belief that women are entitled to be avenged for their ruin by the death of those who wrought the ruin.

Invitation or Warning.

A GROUP of attorneys were discussing circumstantial evidence, which has from time to time been introduced in trials which at first appeared to be of great importance and which subsequently were rendered worthless by ridicule or other circumstances. Said one of the attorneys:

"They tell a story of a judge in one of the districts of Connecticut who had a man up before him for selling liquor in a town which had adopted a no-license law. The prosecuting attorney had proved a case against the man and one of his strongest points was the fact that several reputable witnesses, that the man had a sign on the corner of the house which represented a man holding up a glass of beer. The judge in commenting on the evidence before the case was given to the jury said:

"Gentlemen, you have heard the evidence, and the strongest point that has been made by the prosecution has been the matter of the sign which depicts a man holding up a glass of beer. The prosecuting attorney has laid great stress upon this point, alleging that it was an invitation for the public at large to indulge in the goods which he had for sale. It is a point upon which too much weight should not be put in your deliberations, for the attorney has not made it clear whether the sign was displayed as an invitation or merely as a warning."

about "Cousin John" or "Aunt Kate," and so on indefinitely.

It is more like a big family than a big county.

Obviously, the trend of thought on big, general subjects must be nearly unanimous when there is such frequent interchange of views and ideas.

There is one view that tops all the others. It is that innocent women must be protected from the seducer and the outrager, and that death to the offending men is the only just punishment for the crime. They believe in keeping that pal-

cus may yet be saved." Lured by this promise the blind girl visited the house of the Egyptian and there confessed to him that it was her hand, and not Julia's, that had administered the fatal draught.

Arbaces was disturbed to find that Nydia knew of his share in the procuring of the potion and was fearful that she would carry out her threat and tell her story to the magistrates. Julia, he reasoned, would keep silent for her own sake, but this young lady was rarer under lock and key for a while. So, disregarding her entreaties that she might share her captivity with lone, he bade the slaves lock her in a room, and set Sozia, the slave, to guard her.

Sosia was a garrulous person and beguiled his vigil by conversations with his prisoner. She was from Thessaly; could she tell him his future? Would he be able to save enough to purchase his freedom and set himself up in a neat little perfume shop?

Nydia saw her chance of liberty. Oh, yes, she would summon a demon who should tell him all. She bade him leave the garden gate and the garden door unlocked and ajar the next night that the demon might enter, and to bring to her room a bowl of water. Sosia did as directed and Nydia, bandaging her eyes, bade him keep silent and he would soon hear the water bubble and the demon speak. Then she glided out of the unlocked door and made her way swiftly to the garden, leaving the foolish fellow shaking with the fear at what he supposed was the noise of the approaching demon.

But great was the blind girl's despair when, upon reaching the gate,

she found it locked. To add to her terror she heard voices in conversation in the shrubbery—the voice of Arbaces and of a certain low-browed priest of Isis, Calenus. Feeling with her hands along the walls of the house for a way of escape, she came to the entrance of a passage leading down to the vaults under the mansion. This passage she descended, but was horrified to find that the voices came nearer, the two men apparently following her down the dark tunnel. Finally she came to a locked door and, unable to proceed further, concealed her slight form behind a projecting buttress.

Calenus had sought Arbaces that night with a purpose. Concealed in the grove before the temple of Cybele, he had been a witness of the murder of Apocides, and, waiting until the Egyptian had so committed himself to the charges against Glauco as to be unable to withdraw them, he now came to reveal his knowledge to the murderer and to claim as a reward for his continued silence a share of the vast wealth which Arbaces was known to possess.

The wily Egyptian pretended to yield to the demands of Calenus, expatiating upon the regard in which he had always held him and bade him come to the treasure chamber in the vaults of the house that he might select for himself the reward of his faithfulness. Thus they descended the passage which had just been traversed by Nydia.

Near where the blind girl lay concealed the light which Arbaces bore shone on a door thickly bound with iron. Taking a key from his girdle, the Egyptian unlocked it, and, as he pushed it open, said: "Enter, my

(Continued on Ninth Page.)

Boiled Down Classics

(Continued from Fifth Page.)

This Julia received, when, shortly after, accompanied by Nydia, she visited the Witch of Vesuvius. Nydia went with Julia to her home that night and volunteered to tend her bedside in place of her usual slave. The potion, Julia had informed the blind girl, was as colorless and odorless as water. When Julia was asleep Nydia took one of the perfume bottles from the dressing table and emptied out its contents. After rinsing the small bottle thoroughly she reached under the pillow of the sleeping beauty, extracted the precious phial, and poured the philtre into the purloined bottle. Then she filled the phial with pure water and replaced it.

"Now," thought Nydia, as she secreted the philtre in her breast, "I have the power to make Glauco love me."

The next day the wealthy Diomed gave a great dinner party and Glauco condescended to be of the guests. After the banquet Julia offered the Athenian a cup of wine in which she had poured what she supposed was the philtre. Glauco drank to her health, courteously and coldly, and the amorous girl watched in vain for the light of love which she expected to see springing up in his eyes.

"It may work slowly," she sighed to herself. "Perhaps, tomorrow."

Returning home from the banquet, Glauco found Nydia seated under the portico of the garden. "The wine I have drunk has heated me," he said. "I long for some cooling drink."

Nydia brought him a cup of diluted wine cooled with snow—and into which she had poured the philtre. The Athenian raised the cup to his lips, but, ere he had swallowed a fourth of its contents, his attention was arrested by Nydia, who was leaning for support against the wall, her face, before so flushed, as white as snow.

"Why, Nydia! Nydia! What ails thee, child? Art thou ill or in pain?" exclaimed he, putting down the cup. But as he arose from his seat a sudden pang shot through him, and a strange, wild sensation surged over him and he began to give utterance to the ravings and gabble of a madman.

"Oh, speak to me, speak! Do not hate me," cried Nydia, with terror, but, with a wild laugh, Glauco broke from her and ran out of the garden.

As the young man hurried through the streets the people wagged their heads and said, "Too much wine to-night." The spectacle of a drunken man in the streets of Pompeii was too common to command other than amused or sarcastic attention. So, still wildly raving, Glauco passed to a remote part of the city where a temple of Cybele peeped from a lone-some grove of ancient trees.

Before he reached the place, however, Arbaces, impatient to see how the drug had worked upon the Athenian, had started to visit Julia to find out, and had met Apocides before the grove.

High words passed between the two

men on account of the attack upon lone, and the young priest, renouncing the power of Arbaces forever, announced himself as a member of the new sect of Nazarenes, and declared that the next day he would expose, from the altar of Isis, the trickeries of her priests and the corrupt life of the Egyptian.

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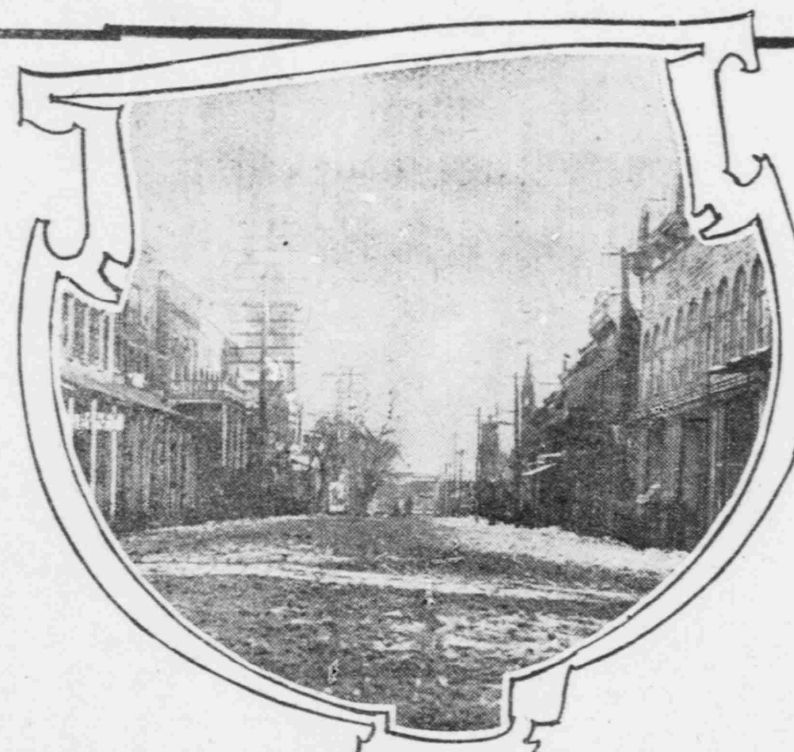
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The Upper Picture Shows the Crowd Leaving the Court House at Culpeper. The Bottom Picture Is of the Main Street in the Virginia Town.

body of Apocides as that of one belonging to the new sect, proposing to give it Christian burial. Arbaces reproached the man for an atheist, and asked him, "In which of our gods do you believe?"

"None," replied Olithus stoutly, and with his staff struck a wooden statue of Cybele, which stood near, from its pedestal.

The crowd would have torn him to pieces, but the centurion gave him in charge to his under officers to be brought before the proper tribunal.

A girl darted from the crowd and gazing into the face of Olithus, cried: "By Jupiter! A stout knave. We shall have a man for the tiger now—one for each beast."

"Ho," shouted the mob, "a man for the lion and one for the tiger! What luck, Io Paean!"

For Pansa the hedle was to give a great show in the amphitheater in a few days and had provided a lion and a tiger. Now fate had sent victims for the beasts.

Next day all Pompeii talked of nothing but the crime of Glauco and the

coming spectacle in the amphitheater. Nydia was filled with horror at the outcome of her act and lone was desperate. Glauco had murdered her brother. No, Glauco must be innocent! Arbaces, exercising his right as guardian, procured an order from the magistrates and, seizing lone by force as she was going to her litter to visit Glauco—who had been released under bail in the custody of his friend—hurled the young woman to his own dark dwelling. "I will hide my time," said he, "and after the death of Glauco."

In the house of Sallust Glauco regained his reason, but his nerves and health were miserably shattered. He had drunk so sparingly of the poisoned cup that his madness was not permanent. The whole thing seemed like a horrible dream but he was confident that it was not his hand that had struck down Apocides.

Nydia, wild with grief, kept midnight watch before the door of the house where the man she loved so devotedly was recovering his reason. The dark Arbaces found her there and said: "Follow me to my home—Glauc-